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ABSTRACT

Information on censorship in academia in the United States is presented, based on censorship cases reported in the "Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom" from 1976 to 1981. Cases occurring in academia accounted for 63 of the more than 800 cases reported. The states and institutions in which the censorship attacks occurred are identified, along with type of staff/individuals or organizations that initiated the attacks. The largest number of attacks were recorded for 1976. Although attacks were widespread throughout the country, the majority came from the more heavily populated states. Administrators led as the chief proponents of censorship. Obscenity and pornography, the most common reasons for censorship, formed the basis for most attacks at the college level. Other reasons for attack varied from violating journalistic ethics to not meeting university standards. The majority of attacks were directed at large universities. Student newspapers and films were most often subject to attacks. In higher education, more attacks were successful than unsuccessful. Success was defined as the objectionable materials being banned, removed, or cancelled. Comparisons to a 1966-1975 study are also made. It is recommended that educators must take more responsibility for protecting the tenets of academic freedom. (SW)

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KEEPING THE DEVIL AWAY FROM MISS JONES: CENSORSHIP IN ACADEMIA, 1976-1980

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Censorship attacks on institutions of higher learning in the United States are widespread, and have a long history. This study will provide data on some basic questions regarding censorship in academia: When did censorship occur? Where? Who or what groups were responsible for the attack? Who or what materials were attacked? What reasons were given by censors? and what were the results of the attempts?

Data was gathered and analyzed from censorship cases reported in the Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom from 1976 to 1981. (The Newsletter is published by the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom.) Cases occurring in academia accounted for sixty-three of the more than eight hundred cases reported. Since only a small percentage of cases occurring on college campuses are reported, the actual number of attempts for this five year period was probably much higher than can be reported here.

Table I records the number of cases by year.

TABLE I

Number of Censorship Cases Reported, 1976-1980

1976	16
1977	8
1978	14
1979	10
1980	15

An earlier study by Woods reported 236 cases from institutions of higher learning during 1966-1975 (1). The rate of reported censorship attacks fell from 23.6 in the earlier study to 12.6 per year in this study. During the later five years either college campuses were not exposed to censorship as often as during the previous ten years, or the incidences were not reported to the Office of Intellectual Freedom. The authors note that college campuses did "settle" in the late 1970s, with much of the activism of the 1960s and early 1970s disappearing. This could account for the drop noted in the censorship rate.

Table II lists the institutions and states where the attacks took place. Attempts were widespread. California and New York led with seven each while Pennsylvannia and Illinois had five. As would be expected, the higher number of attempts usually occur in the more populous states.

TABLE II

Location of Attacks, 1976-1980

Antioch College, Ohio	Point Loma College, Cal.
Arizona State Univ., (2)	Prairie State College, Ill.
Baylor Univ., Texas	Princeton Univ., N. J.
Boston College, Mass.	Queens College, N. Y.
Boston Univ., Mass.	R. I. School of Design
Bucks County Comm. Coll., Penn.	St. John's Univ., N. Y.
Cal. Polytechnic State	St. Louis Univ., Missouri
Calvin College, Mich.	Sangaman State Univ., Ill.
Central Michigan Univ.	Scottsdale Comm. Coll., Ariz.
Central State Univ., Okla.	State Univ. of N. Y., Buffalo
City College, N. Y. (2)	State Univ. of N. Y., Stonybrook
Delaware County Comm. Coll., Penn.	Trenton State College, N. J.
Duke Univ., N. C.	Univ. of Cal., Berkeley (3)
Georgetown Univ., D. C.	Univ. of Cal., Los Angeles
Glassboro State Coll., N. J.	Univ. of Cal., Santa Cruz
Harvard Univ., Mass.	Univ. of Kansas
Herbert H. Lehman Coll., N. Y.	Univ. of Kentucky
	Univ. of Maryland
	Univ. of Minnesota (2)

TABLE II--Continued

Illinois State Univ.	Univ. of Missouri, Columbia
Indiana Univ.	Univ. of Pennsylvannia
John Hopkins Univ., Mary.	Univ. of Rhode Island
Lincoln Coll., Ill.	Univ. of Texas (2)
Lincoln Univ., Penn.	Univ. of Virginia
Marymount Manhattan Coll., N. Y.	Washington Univ., Missouri
Michigan State Univ.	Washington and Lee Univ., Vir.
Middle Tenn. State Univ.	West Chester State Coll., Penn.
Northern Ill. State Univ.	Wichita State Univ., Kansas
	Wright State Univ., Okla.
	Xavier Univ., Ohio

A wide variety of organizations, people, and institutions initiated attacks. Table III provides a breakdown of the sources of attempts. Administrators led as the chief proponents of censorship. Administrators at Boston University, for example, were charged by students with violating free speech by withholding more than $5,000 in student funds from the school paper, BU Exposure, "in retaliation for expression of certain views" (2).

TABLE III

Sources of Attempts, 1976-1980

Administrators	30	Editorial Board	1
Alumni	2	Federal Agencies	2
Attorneys/Courts	8	Legislators	3
Board of Censors	1	Librarians	4
Boards of Regents	2	Parents	3
Bookstore Manager	1	Police	2
City Officials	1	Roman Catholic Archdiocese	1
Community Groups	4	State Laws	1
Companies	2	Student Governments	6
Consulate	1	Student Organizations	5
Depts /Faculty	3	Students	5
Dormitory Residents	1		

Attorneys and courts became involved in some cases because they believed

a law had been violated. Bronx District Attorney Mario Merola, for example, was one of several people involved in trying to get students to call off a showing of Deep Throat at Herbert H. Lehman College in New York City because several years earlier it had been banned in Times Square. The attempt was unsuccessful because the existing ban did not apply to college campuses (3).

A representative example of Student Government censorship occurred at West Chester State College, Pennsylvannia when the Student Government attempted to determine what advertisements could appear in the student newspaper, The Quad. The newspaper rejected ROTC advertisements as "misleading and exploitive," and successfully resisted the challenge to change their censorious advertising practices (4).

Obscenity and pornography, the most common reasons for censorship, formed the basis for most attacks at the college level, as illustrated in Table IV. After showings of Deep Throat and The Devil in Miss Jones at Trenton State College, New Jersey Assemblyman Robert P. Hollenbeck sponsored a resolution to investigate movies shown at public colleges. He felt taxpayers should not be required to support a pornographic film festival. After much debate, the resolution passed forty-five to fifteen (5).

TABLE IV

Reasons for Attacks, 1976-1980

Blasphemy	1	Political	5
Controversial	3	Pornography	7
Could harm community	2	Sexually explicit	3
Differing views of history	2	Stereotyped Negroes	1
Failure to meet university standards	2	Unauthorized	1
Language	2	Violation of the Atomic Energy Act	1
Obscene	10	Violation of journalistic ethics	6
Offensive	8	Violent	2
Pictures of Iranian students	1	No reasons stated	6

Other reasons for attack varied from violating journalistic ethics to not meeting university standards. A case of the latter occurred when Boston College Vice President for Student Affairs, Kevin Duffy, had editors of The Heights evicted from campus after the newspaper ran advertisements for abortion clinics. He felt these advertisements violated the basic values of the college (6). An example of the former was an attack at City College, New York on The Campus, a student weekly, for practicing news manipulation. This attempt failed when administrators informed the Student Senate that they had violated due process requirements of the New York Board of Higher Education by suspending the journal (7).

Table V lists the types of institutions affected.

TABLE V

Types of Institutions Affected, 1976-1980

Junior Colleges	14
Colleges	14
Universities	45
University libraries	(5)

The majority of attacks were directed at large universities. Examples are two cases involving the Daily Texan at the University of Texas, Austin. In one case in 1976 the paper defeated an attempt to bar it from endorsing political candidates and legislation (8). The second attack occurred over published photographs of Iranian students disrupting a speech by the ex-Shah of Iran's U. S. Ambassador, Fereydoun Hoveyda. The pictures were subpoenaed but the student editor refused to comply and was briefly jailed (9).

Items that were under siege are listed in Table VI. Student newspapers and films were most often subject to attacks.

TABLE VI

Materials Under Attack, 1976-1980

Books:
- Black Spring
- Dracula
- History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey
- Light in August
- Show Me!
- Translations of works by Moliere and Juvenal
- Textbook on human sexuality

Films:
- Bel Ami
- A Clockwork Orange
- Coonskin
- Debbie Does Dallas
- Deep Throat (9)
- The Devil in Miss Jones
- Emmanualle
- Salo
- Shampoo
- Straw Dogs
- X- rated films (no titles)

Magazines:
- Blueboy
- Forum
- Oui
- Pegasus (student magazine)
- Playboy
- Player
- Playgirl
- Venue (student magazine)

Radio Stations:
- WBUR-FM
- WGTB-FM
- WXPN-FM

Speakers:
- Stokely Carmichael
- Jane Fonda
- PLO UN Rep. Abdul Hassan

Student Newspapers:
- The Advocate
- Baylor Lariat
- BU Exposure
- The Campus
- Cavalier Daily
- Daily Californian
- Daily Texan (2)
- The Heights
- Minnesota Daily
- Not the St. John's Journal
- Observation Point
- The Point
- The Quad
- The State News
- The Vista
- Newspaper (no title given)

Other:
- Art reproductions
- Conference
- Course on human sexuality
- Exhibits (5)
- Faculty
- Gay Lib (campus organization)
- Lost and Old Rivers (ballet)
- Political literature
- Stained glass art work
- Words: "input" and "feedback"

Several items appearing in Table VI were also listed in the previous study: Deep Throat, The Devil in Miss Jones, the magazines Playboy and Penthouse, and speaker Stokely Carmichael (10).

Most objections could be considered routine, falling into categories like pornography, obscenity, and language. Others can be considered unusual, such as the publication of a letter in which four physicists commented on the controversy over Progressive magazine's H-bomb article. The Daily Californian, University of California, Berkeley, defied a government warning from the U. S. Department of Energy that they would be in violation of the Atomic Energy Act if they published the letter (11). Another unusual case concerned the vote to ban the words "input" and "feedback" from all meetings of the Executive Committee of the Student Body at Washington and Lee University, Virginia. Penalties were to be censure and prayers for divine retribution (12). This latter case would surely seem to have been done in jest.

In higher education, more attacks were successful than unsuccessful. Success is defined as the objectionable materials being banned, removed, or cancelled. Partially successful cases resulted in restraints being placed upon the materials. Only thirteen cases were recorded as unsuccessful, with the results of fourteen cases remaining in doubt as final results were never reported in the Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom. Table VII details the outcome of the attempts.

TABLE VII

Disposition of Attacks, 1976-1980

Successful	28
Partially successful	8
Unsuccessful	13
Unknown	14

Comparisons to the 1966-1975 Study

Comparison with the previous study show surprising similarities (13):

1. More attacks continue to be reported from universities than from colleges and junior colleges (14).
2. The chief censors in higher education continue to be administrators (15).
3. The main reasons for censorship attempts are still obscenity, sex, and nudity (16).
4. Apparently, more attempts are successful than unsuccessful.

On the other hand:

1. Few repeaters were found from the previous lists and
2. no books listed in this study appeared in the previous study.

Summary and Recommendations

1. When did the attacks occur?

The largest number of attacks were recorded for 1976. There were great differences among the number of cases reported for each year.

2. Where did the attacks occur?

Attacks were widespread throughout the country but the majority came from the more heavily populated states.

3. Who were the proponents?

The leading proponents were administrators who accounted for almost half of the attempts. The rest came from a variety of sources.

4. What were the reasons for the attacks?

Obscenity was the leading reason, with pornography and offensiveness being cited frequently.

5. What was attacked?

Most attacks were directed at student newspapers with films also coming under frequent attack.

6. What were the results?

The majority of attempts were successful with only thirteen cases being recorded as unsuccessful. Fourteen cases, however, remain in doubt.

The continued incidence of censorship attacks argues strongly for academicians to keep abreast of all censorship attempts in their institutions, and to report them to the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom. A censorship attempt has more chance of succeeding if it is not publicized, so those involved in higher education will be aiding the cause of intellectual freedom by also reporting attempts to local and major state newspapers. Professors and administrators should, at the same time, be informed of their state's obscenity and pornography laws.

The major recommendation, however, is that educators must take more responsibility for protecting the tenets of academic freedom. Any attack anywhere in the academic environment is cause for alarm. Censors would isolate ideas with which they disagree and prescribe which topics will be available for investigation. The attack in the library affects what can be included in the science or humanities or social science curriculum. The administrator who successfully attacks the content of the school newspaper may feel emboldened to withhold merit raises from those faculty who have disagreed with her/him. The implications are horrendous. We should all become involved and concerned when academic freedom is threatened. The integrity of our colleges and university systems is at stake.

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